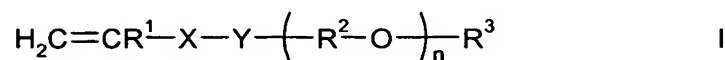


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A copolymer which comprises, in copolymerized form,

- (A) 60 to 99% by weight of at least one monoethylenically unsaturated polyalkylene oxide monomer of the formula I



in which the variables have the following meanings:

X is -CH₂- or -CO-, if Y is -O-;

is -CO-, if Y is -NH-;

Y is -O- or -NH-;

R¹ is hydrogen or methyl;

R² are identical or different C₂-C₆-alkylene radicals, which may be arranged blockwise or randomly;

R³ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl;

n is an integer from 3 to 50,

- (B) 1 to 40% by weight of at least one quaternized nitrogen-containing monoethylenically unsaturated monomer,

(C) 0 to 39% by weight of anionic monoethylenically unsaturated monomers and

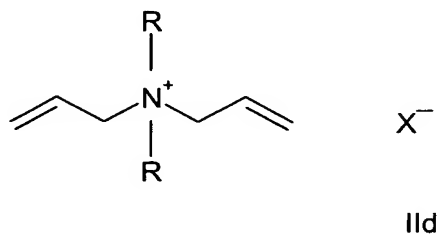
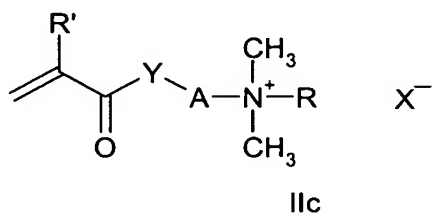
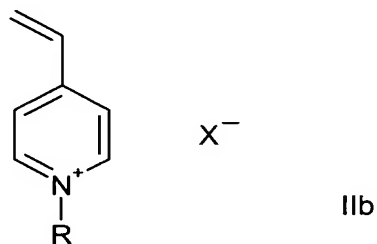
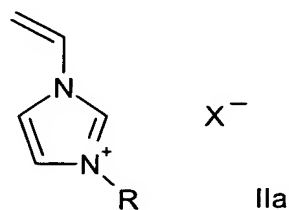
(D) 0 to 30% by weight of other nonionic monoethylenically unsaturated monomers

and has an average molecular weight M_w of from 2000 to 100 000.

Claim 2 (Original): The copolymer according to claim 1, which comprises, in copolymerized form, as monomer (A), at least one monomer of the formula I in which the variables have the following meanings:

- X is -CO- or -CH₂-;
Y is -O-;
R¹ is hydrogen or methyl;
R² is ethylene, propylene or mixtures thereof;
R³ is methyl;
n is an integer from 5 to 30.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The copolymer according to claim 1 [[or 2]], which comprises, in copolymerized form, as monomer (B), at least one of the monomers of the formula IIa to IId



in which the variables have the following meanings:

- R is C₁-C₄-alkyl or benzyl;
R' is hydrogen or methyl;
Y is -O- or -NH-;

A is C₁-C₆-alkylene;

X- is halide, C₁-C₄-alkyl sulfate, C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonate and C₁-C₄-alkyl carbonate.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The copolymer according to ~~claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, which comprises, in copolymerized form, 60 to 98% by weight of monomer (A), 1 to 39% by weight of monomer (B) and 1 to 39% by weight of monomer (C).

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The copolymer according to ~~claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, in which the weight ratio of (A) to (B) is $\geq 2:1$ and for the case where the copolymers comprise a monomer (C) in copolymerized form, the weight ratio of (A) to (C) is also $\geq 2:1$.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The ~~use of~~ method of using copolymers according to ~~claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1 as dispersants for clay minerals.